1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
FF52 Nupe FF52

132 The highest temperature measured in Bida was 106 in the shade, only a few degrees lower than in the hottest (but driest) district of Nigeria, 164 Bornu. The humidity of Bida, on the other hand, almost equals the humidity in the rain-forest belt. The combination of features from south and north which seems characteristic of Nupe country has its most unfavourable aspect in climatic conditions. The influence of the unfavourable climate upon the health of the natives is evident in the large proportion of people suffering from lung trouble and rheumatic diseases. Climate and soil combine to even more deadly effects: full of malaria-carrying mosquitoes, the river forests infested with tsetse-fly, and all watercourses polluted with bilharzia, Nupe is indeed an ill-favoured country.

231 The tsetse-infected areas have played their part in Nupe history. The forest belt in the south, of which the strips of river forest in Nupe are the northernmost outposts, marks the southern boundary of cattle and horse in Nigeria. The parts of Nupe which are free from tsetse are also safe for horses and cattle (more precisely, the northern breed of cattle, which is not immune from trypanosomiasis). Nupe country, with the neighbouring Ilorin—the southernmost country in which horses can be kept and to which the nomadic Fulani herdsmen can take their cattle—became also the southern outpost of the Fulani Empire, the southernmost stronghold of that race of cattle-people and horsemen whose spectacular conquest of Nigeria was stemmed only by the natural bulwark of the forest belt.

HEALTH AND DISEASE

164 In the Census of 1931 Nupe appears among the districts with the highest proportion of blindness, leprosy, and insanity.[1] In the case of 732 leprosy the Census estimate of over 5, and possibly over 10, per thousand is hardly exaggerated—even casual observation shows this, although the fear and secrecy that surround this disease among the Nupe make a more precise estimate impossible. Information which I obtained on the spot, from the Medical Officer in charge of Bida Native Administration Hospital, rather went to show that blindness is not more frequent in Nupe than elsewhere in Nigeria. As regards the proportion of insanity, 158 I have seen too few cases to venture any definite opinion. A remark on the nature of the mental disorders, however, may not be without interest. Of the five cases which I have seen three showed clear symptoms of paranoid schizophrenia—strongly delusional thinking, to the extent of persecution mania, combined with violent aggressiveness which appeared and subsided with marked suddenness, and involving no general degeneration of normal intellectual functions. Two cases were simple forms of imbecility.[2]

[1] *Census of Nigeria*, 1931 (London, 1933). The Census figures refer partly to the tribe, i.e. to random samples of Nupe (ii, pp. 110–11), partly to the political district of Bida Emirate (ii, p. 391), and partly to Niger Province as a whole ('Nupe Province' in the old terminology), the population of which consists to two-thirds of Nupe (i, pp. 41–2, ii, p. 38).

[2] See p. 402.

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
FF52 Nupe FF52

233 178 northern, humped, breed. They were humpless and of small build, evidently related to the dwarf cattle which exist to-day in certain areas in eastern and south-eastern Nigeria. These dwarf cattle are said to have been very widespread in eastern and northern Nupe country before the Fulani conquest; the Gbari, for example, maintain that they had owned, originally, large herds of these cattle which, to-day, have almost disappeared in this region. The traditions of Nupe speak of a magic connected with a bull or a cow with which the ancestor-king Tsoede endowed the first Beni chiefs. The *ketsá* ritual on the Niger river demanded the sacrifice of a bull, to be presented annually by the chief of the Kyedye. Evidently, these rites and sacrifices could only have referred to these dwarf, pre-Fulani cattle. Anyhow, there is no evidence that cattle have ever played any important part in the economy of the peasant areas, and possibly in the whole pre-Fulani kingdom.

233 471 177 The disappearance of cattle, however, from the Fulani-Nupe, and from the households of the rich, demands explanation. No doubt the 'great trouble' has played some part in this change. With the disappearance of slavery the problem of finding suitable and sufficiently cheap labour presented an additional difficulty. But the decision to abandon cattle-keeping was also due to a decided change in the attitude of the people towards this commodity. The herds of cattle were, in a word, capital. The Nupe do not live on the cattle, basing their diet on milk and butter, as the Fulani and other cattle people do. Nor are the cattle in Nupe linked to a whole system of religious beliefs, taboos, and ceremonial usages. The *Etsu* of Agaie (on whose herd I could examine these questions in detail) occasionally sold one or two head of cattle when he was in need of money—this was the only concrete use to which he or any of the Nupe cattle-owners would put their cattle. I cannot judge how far status and prestige may have formerly entered into this assessment of the value of cattle. I gathered that it could not have been of much significance; the possession of horses counted for much more. But the existing incentives to possess cattle must have been further weakened, and even reversed, by two changes in the present-day economic situation. First, by the enormous rise in the price of cattle, especially in the countries south of Nupe, which came with the increased (European and Europeanized) demand for meat and skins. Second, by the appearance of new means of economic enterprise, and the prospects of more profitable, large-scale trade, which necessitated a more liquid form of capital. It is a fact that a large number of rich cattle-owners soon sold their herds, attracted by the high price, and also realizing most probably the greater advantage that, under modern conditions, lay in transforming their stock into ready money.

● 231 This tendency to keep the capital 'liquid' is shown also in the readiness of the Nupe to experiment with different kinds of live stock. Thus we find here and there—and the same thing is reported from Nupe a hundred years ago—ostriches, which the Nupe buy from traders from the north, feed and tend and finally sell again with a profit. An enterprising chief had even taken to breeding horses; it was done on a very small scale, and was in Nupe an isolated case, but still characteristic of

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
FF52 Nupe FF52

the general trend. The same trend is, finally, evident in the Nupe method of keeping sheep and goats.

Sheep and Goats

Very rarely do the Nupe farmers (or town people for that matter) breed sheep and goats. It is, once more, the principle of 'liquid' resources that counts. A great many farmers buy a sheep or goat when it is young, or when sheep and goats are cheap, and sell it again later on with profit, when they are in need of money. Certain regular fluctuations in the price of goats form the basis for this calculation. During the season of the great Mohammedan feasts, when rams are killed in almost every house, prices go up, to fall again during the rainy season, before the harvest, when there is little money coming in and accordingly little demand for animals.[1] This method of husbandry accounts for the very irregular distribution of sheep and goats at a given time, varying greatly with the individual need for money and the ability or inclination to invest money in animals. The general figures *per capita* of sheep and goats are surprisingly low (see the statistical table). The figure for Bida town is 0·12 and for the districts 0·71 per male adult. These figures reflect the very small money resources the Nupe have for engaging in this sort of seasonal trade. Throughout the year, and especially during the time of the Mohammedan festivals, a large number of sheep and goats have, in fact, to be imported from Hausa. But the figures also show that sheep- and goat-keeping is more frequent in the districts than in Bida. This bears out what I have said above about the influence of varied and expanding economic enterprise upon stock-keeping. Bida, though richer than the districts, is poorer in live stock; the centre of trade and of manifold economic interests keeps its capital more liquid than the country with its limited scope of economic prospects.

It is interesting to note in this connexion that in goat- or sheep-breeding the young animals always belong to the owner of the mother-goat or -sheep; the owner of the female animal may ask the owner of the male animal to let him have the animal for breeding, but this would be done without payment or return of any kind, merely as a personal favour. Female animals are accordingly more expensive than male animals, and the inducement to part with the mother-goat thus often overweighs the interest in the breeding itself.

Other Domestic Animals

The Nupe keep no pigs and eat no pork—an avoidance which is not, as far as I see, due only to Mohammedan influence. The few pigs one sees in the country belong to Yoruba.

[1] Prices for sheep and goats vary from 5*s.* to 15*s.*, according to the season (see p. 316). The great seasonal changes are also shown in the figures for sheep and goats slaughtered in Bida in the different months of the year: January, 130; February, 150; March, 82; April, 151; May, 129; June, 68; July, 58; August, 114; September, 116; October, 119; November, 120; December, 122. The highest figures refer to January/February and April, the months of the Mohammedan festivals of *Ramadan* and *Muharram*; the lowest figures to June and July, in the middle of the rains, before the first harvest of the season.

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
FF52 Nupe FF52

There is little to be said about fowls. In every house chickens are kept; men and women, grown-ups and children, have their own chicken. Often one sees a young boy going to the market to sell 'his' chicken, given him by father or mother. The fowls are bought and sold regularly in the food-markets of every larger village. Fowls represent the most important sacrificial food of pagan (and to some extent Mohammedan) Nupe; almost every religious ceremony, communal as well as household-rites, involves the killing of a fowl. Chickens are, besides, the most desirable food the Nupe know. Eggs are not marketed and in certain parts of Nupe not eaten. The Beni do not eat eggs because 'they make men sterile and women barren'. The Nupe also keep pigeons, for which they put up a bowl of water on a forked pole inside the house. Pigeons are not as a rule traded in the market, nor are they eaten regularly, but sometimes the eating of pigeons is ordered by diviners for ritual reasons.

Donkeys and Horses

About three-quarters of the donkeys which are found in Nupe belong to Bida town. They are transport animals owned mostly by traders, pack animals used in their caravans which carry palm-oil and salt from the river steamers up country, and bring natron down from Hausa and Bornu. In 1935 the only districts possessing no donkeys were those which have other means of transport: the riverain area, and the district of Mokwa through which the railway runs. Again, the largest number of horses is found in Bida. Horses, as I have said already, are a symbol of rank and status. The *Etsu* Nupe may, as a sign of his highest esteem, present a man with a horse. But every man who can afford it will buy one for himself or for his sons. A horse represents, if not the most profitable, the most noble expenditure or investment.

Yet, profitable in the narrow sense, or in the wider sense as implying enhancement of prestige—all these possibilities of investment of capital in live stock are determined by the amount of liquid capital available; in other words, by the volume of money in circulation. The economic stringency of the country which, starting from the decline in the market prices for native produce in 1934–5, as well as the subsequent recovery in 1936, is reflected clearly in the figures of the census of live stock for Bida Division for the last four years.

	Sheep	*Goats*	*Horses*	*Donkeys*
1933 . .	5,788	28,856	1,196	111
1934 . .	6,600	29,445	1,160	157
1935 . .	5,010	25,876	917	137
1936 . .	5,702	34,751	1,007	149

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
FF52 Nupe FF52

we have little land, much less than people in other parts of the country. We even have to make our farms up on the hill-side since there is no vacant land left in the valley.' This is true enough. When I visited Doko on my second expedition I saw that a few enterprising men had started farming on the steep stony hills at the back of the village—a thing nobody dreamed of doing when I stayed in Doko on my first expedition two years before.

The appreciation of manure has led in Beni country to an interesting co-operation between the population of a village, or a certain landlord, and the groups of nomadic Fulani herdsmen who come down regularly in the dry season to find pastures for their herds. The Nupe landowners invite the head of such a nomadic group, and sometimes induce him by presents of food or assistance in the building of the camp, to make his camp on their fallow land. This procedure is repeated every year with a new plot of fallow land. The year after the land has been thus manured it is taken under cultivation. I have myself seen the enormous difference in the growth of the crops between a plot on which the Fulani had made their camp and other, ordinary farm-plots.[1]

Cultivation is also to some extent carried on inside the villages and even inside Bida town. In the villages, where large open spaces separate the different *efu*, the cultivation inside the village is fairly extensive, and one grows there the main crops, millet, guinea-corn, ground-nuts, &c. In densely populated villages where there is little open space left, and in Bida town, the people still grow a few things. Something will be planted, in fact, wherever there is room, all along the town walls, round the compound wall, on any open space in front of the house and even inside the house. Here are grown chiefly greens and vegetables, beans, sorrel, red pepper, also sweet potatoes, cassava or maize, and hemp. As a rule the small plots in or near the house are planted with crops which are easy to tend, and this work is left to the old men who can no longer walk long distances and do heavy work. Even inside Bida there exists a certain specialization; on the small stretch of marsh-land that runs through the town, and in the thick groves on the banks of the two streams, typical marsh-land crops are grown: sugar-cane, rice, and bananas.

In this large variety of crops cultivated in Nupe not all are, of course, of equal importance from a nutritive or general economic point of view. Again, it is impossible to give a simple formula. The staple crops, the crops on which the food supply of the people primarily depends, are millet, sorghum, yam, and, to a lesser extent, rice. From the point of view of trade the most important crops are rice, ground-nuts, cotton, but also sorghum and yam and a few lesser crops. Cassava, maize, and sweet potatoes (grown inland) are of secondary importance only. This is shown clearly in the attitude of the Nupe farmer towards these crops. The pride of the farmer is always his millet, sorghum, and yam farm. Cassava and maize, the Nupe would say, grow anywhere, and anybody, farmer or no farmer, can grow them. A man who would rely on this

[1] Among the Bida landlords it is an accepted arrangement to place one's fallow land at the disposal of the Bororó previous to leasing it to a new tenant. The landlord can then obtain a much higher price for his land.

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
FF52 Nupe FF52

of the compound or under a shady tree in front of the house. The grain is either spread out on the floor and beaten with sticks or pounded in a big wooden mortar. The former method can be used only in houses which possess a hard, clean floor in front of the huts; where there is only sandy ground (as is the case in many smaller villages) the second method has to be adopted. The first method, besides, is only possible when large quantities of grain are threshed. The small quantities normally needed for daily use are done more quickly by pounding. In either case at least three people (women and girls) will be working together. After threshing the grain is winnowed. This is done with the help of two platters of basket-work, by repeatedly pouring the grain slowly from one into the other; the woman who does the winnowing walks up and down in front of the house, letting the breeze remove the chaff. Finally the grain is milled, either on a grinding-stone or, again, in the mortar. The latter is the heavier but quicker work, the former is slower but gives the finer flour. The empty heads of grain left over after threshing are used as fodder for horses; the chaff, collected after winnowing, as fodder for sheep and goats.

Food Crops and Market Crops

The foregoing description of methods of storage and preparation does not embrace all the crops grown in Nupe. Before we can make our list complete we must consider another aspect of the question, namely, whether the produce is used for household consumption or intended for sale. No comprehensive simple distinction is possible: we can only mark extremes—a few crops which are used exclusively for consumption or for marketing, respectively, while the rest, the large majority of crops, may be used for either purpose. The produce used for sale comprises first of all the non-food crops: cotton (for European export), indigo, and henna. Food crops grown almost exclusively for the market are: late ground-nuts and red pepper (for European export), and rice and onions (for internal markets or export to other countries in Nigeria). The crops which are rarely sold and used primarily for household consumption are few: cassava, beans, a few vegetables, and sweet potatoes and maize grown in small quantities on inland farms.

In the case of crops grown for export the question of storage does not arise, at least not for the producer himself, for this produce is sold almost immediately after harvesting (e.g. late ground-nuts, rice). Instead, we have two new questions to consider. First, that of transport and packing. But this also is mostly a matter for the trader and middleman, not for the producer. The native traders provide the big grass bags in which the rice is packed and transported, the European trading-companies the sacks for cotton; the other produce is transported in the ordinary receptacles of the country, large baskets, gourds, or tin basins of European manufacture.

Second, there is the question of the special preparation, an elementary manufacturing process, which is frequently applied to the agricultural produce intended for local trade before it is put on the market. In the markets of Nupe agricultural produce is sold either as it is (e.g. yam,

3: Forde E-4 (no date) 1955 FF52 Nupe FF52

Plants important for trade and in native industry include cotton, henna (*lali*), and hemp, both introduced from Hausa country, and gourds. The by-products of agriculture, such as grain stalks, are used by the cultivator and his family for making fences, beds, and mats; sorghum stalks yield black and red vegetable dyes. Occasionally large non-fruit-bearing trees are cut down and sold to carpenters.[11]

Organization and Division of Labour

A two-fold principle of collective family work (*efakó*) and individual work (*bucá*) applies to farm labour, and to its products, income, and granaries. Each male member of the household owns a *bucá* farm, while all work on the *efakó* farm, the produce of which is stored in the *efakó* granaries, the head controlling the disposal. Sometimes forms of productive labour other than farm work are organized according to the *efakó* system, e.g., indigo-dyeing at Mokwa.

All those who share in the *efakó* group work are housed, clothed, and fed, and have their tax and marriage payments met by the household head, who also supplies tools and pays for their repair. Personal requirements beyond this are paid for from the proceeds of the *bucá* work. The present tendency is for large *efakó* groups to disintegrate on the death of the household head, the members of the group demanding a larger measure of freedom than the *efakó* system provides.

Mutual assistance and large-scale collective labour is of two types: *egbe*, for *efakó* farm work (mainly tilling and weeding), and for work for the community as a whole, e.g., building or roofing of a chief's house, repair of a bush bridge or road or of a town wall or the N.A. rest-house, etc. *Egbe* farm work is, on the whole, performed by younger people, often members of one or more of the age-set associations; it is accompanied by drummers and musicians and concludes with a feast. Help is generally enlisted for tilling and for the first and second weeding, and *egbe* is performed first and on the largest scale on the chief's farm.

The second type of mutual assistance—*dzolo*—is less important. It is an arrangement among a number of farmers to work on each other's farms in turn, usually for the harvesting of groundnuts, cotton, and beans.

Wage labour (*kantsi*, Hausa, *lada*) plays an insignificant part in Nupe production. It is found only in large commercial centres, such as Kacha and Jebba, and in Bida for temporary employment only.

Women do practically no farm work, but they undertake the processing of agricultural produce for market and the actual marketing, and the exploitation of the shea-nut tree is entirely in the hands of women.[12]

Floor-beating is an important women's task and is made something of a ceremony. While the old women pour water on to it the young women beat the floor with wooden beaters wrapped in rags in time to the rhythm of drums.[13]

Livestock

Cattle are of minor importance in Nupe economy. They are owned only by butchers who buy from Bornu and Fulani traders. The cattle are of the northern humped breed and are not immune from trypanosomiasis. Sheep are rarely kept for breeding but are fattened and sold.

No pigs are kept and no pork is eaten.[14] Every household keeps chickens which are bought and sold regularly in the food markets of all the larger villages. Eggs are not marketed and are eaten only rarely in Nupe country. Donkeys are kept as transport animals. Horses (mainly in Bida) are a symbol of high rank and status.[15]

[11] Nadel, 1942, pp. 59, 230–7, 238, 205–14; Line, 1947: Temple 1919, p. 236.
[12] Nadel, 1942, pp. 241–56.
[13] Malam Aliyu Bida, notes, ed. P. G. Harris.
[14] Pigs were reported in Sharagi (Share) in 1918 and Patagi in 1912 (Notes by Biscoe and Rudgee).
[15] Nadel, 1942, pp. 261–4.